

Trinity Bible Church
 May 18, 2011
 Lesson 3

Dispensational Transitions From the Dispersion into Babylon To the Close of the New Testament

I. From the Dispersion into Babylon to the close of the Old Testament

1. The Period of Captivity in Babylon. 586-516 B.C.
2. The Prophets' Encouragement.
 - A. Haggai. (Encouragement)
 - B. Zechariah. (The Jealousy of YAHWEH)
3. After the return from Babylon to their land three Old Testament Books were written concerning various events in Israel's history.
 - A. Esther. (Protection of God's People)
 - B. Ezra. (Reconstruction of the Temple and Restoration of the People)
 - C. Nehemiah. (Reconstruction of the City)
4. The Temple Was Rebuilt.
5. The Book of Malachi, the prophet, closes the Old Testament.

Malachi (Repent and Return)

Author and Name of Book: Malachi is only mentioned in Malachi 1:1 as the author of this prophecy. His name means "My Messenger." This is fitting for the book anticipates the coming of the "messenger of the covenant," (cf. 3:1) a prophecy of John the Baptist (Matthew 11:10).

Date of Writing: 450–400 B.C. Concerning the date of Malachi, Gleason Archer writes:

Judging from internal evidence, it seems clear that his prophecies were given in the second half of the fifth century, probably around 435 B.C. We come to this conclusion from the following indications: (1) The Temple had already been rebuilt and Mosaic sacrifice reinstated (1:7, 10; 3:1); (2) A Persian governor was in authority at that time; hence it could not have been during either of Nehemiah's governorships (in 445 and 433 B.C.); (3) The sins which Malachi denounces are the same as those Nehemiah had to correct during his second term, namely, (a) priestly laxity (1:6; Nehemiah 13:4-9), (b) neglect of tithes, to the impoverishment of the Levites (3:7-12 cf. Nehemiah 13:10-13), (c) much intermarriage with foreign women (2:10-16 cf. Nehemiah 13:23-28). It is reasonable to assume that Malachi had already protested against these abuses in the years just preceding Nehemiah's return; hence a fair estimate would be about 435 B.C.

Theme and Purpose: Under the leadership of Nehemiah, there had been a period of revival (Nehemiah 10:28-39), but the priests and the people had grown cold in their walk with God and had become external and mechanical in their observance of the law. Though they were guilty of the sins Malachi denounced (priestly laziness, neglect of the

tithes, and intermarriage with foreign women), the people acted confused over why God was dissatisfied with them. Malachi wrote to answer the questions of the priests and people, to reveal and rebuke them for their sins, their backsliding and poor attitudes. He also ended with a word of encouragement about the coming of the Lord's messenger who would clear the way for Messiah.

Thus, Malachi rebuked the people for their neglect of the true worship of the Lord and called them to repentance (1:6; 3:7). Gleason Archer summarizes the theme as follows:

The theme of Malachi is that sincerity toward God and a holy manner of life are absolutely essential in the Lord's eyes, if His favor is to be bestowed upon the crops and the nation's economic welfare. Israel must live up to her high calling as a holy nation and wait for the coming of the Messiah, who by a ministry of healing as well as judgment will lead the nation to a realization of all her fondest hopes.

Key People: Malachi

Christ as Seen in Malachi: Regarding the Messianic focus of Malachi,

The Book of Malachi is the prelude to four hundred years of prophetic silence, broken finally by the words of the next prophet, John the Baptist: *'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'* (John 1:29). Malachi predicts the coming of the messenger who will clear the way before the Lord (3:1 cf. Isaiah 40:30). John the Baptist later fulfills this prophecy, but in the next few verses (3:2-5) he jumps ahead to Christ in His second advent. (Wilkinson and Boa)

Outline:

1. The Privileged Place of Israel. 1:1-5
 - a. God's Love. 1:1-4
 - b. God's Desired Response. 1:5
2. The Pollution of Israel. 1:6–3:15
 - a. Profaning the Sacrifices. (1:6-14)
 - b. Profaning the Message. (2:1-9)
 - c. Profaning the Marriage. (2:10-16)
 - d. Profaning His Righteousness. 2:17
3. The Purification of Israel.
 - a. The Refining by Fire. 3:1-6
 - f. The Request to Return. 3:7
 - g. The Rebuke to the Robbers. (3:7-12)
 - h. The Rebuke to the Arrogant. (3:13-15)
3. The Promises to the People. 3:16–4:6
 - a. The Righteous Remembered. 3:16-18
 - b. The Righteous One Revealed. 4:1-3
 - c. The Restoring Prophet-Elijah. 4:4-6